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DEPARTMENT FOR INR/R/MR, EAP/TC, EAP/P, EAP/PD - THOMAS HAMM
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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: NORTH KOREA, U.S.-CHINA-TAIWAN RELATIONS

11. Summary: Taiwan's major Chinese-language dailies focused news coverage August 27 on the rapid spread of the H1N1 virus in Taiwan and the Taiwan government's plan to cope with the threat of the epidemic; on the possible visit by the Dalai Lama to Taiwan to pray for the victims of Typhoon Morakot; and on U.S. Senator Edward Kennedy, who passed away in Massachusetts Tuesday. In terms of editorials and commentaries, a column in the KMT-leaning "China Times" predicted that the Six-Party talks will survive in name only, and the United States and North Korea will hold bilateral talks to resolve their problems. An op-ed piece in the pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times," on the other hand, discussed the United States' humanitarian assistance for Taiwan in the wake of Typhoon Morakot. The article said if Washington could "mobilize so quickly for disaster relief efforts, then of course it could do the same in the event of conflict [in the Taiwan Strait]." End summary.

12. North Korea

"The Six-Party Talks Will Survive in Name Only"

The "International Lookout" column in the KMT-leaning "China Times" [circulation: 120,000] wrote (8/27):

"Will the Six-Party talks on the Korean Peninsula's nuclear issue continue to survive in the future? It is a complex issue, but if one has to make a generalized conclusion about the matter, one can say that the Six-Party talks will survive in name only. Only in this way can the barriers to talks between the United States and North Korea be removed. ... The spokesman for the U.S. State Department made an honest comment yesterday: 'We cannot take away the rights of the other four parties, [because] this is a regional security issue.' The United States can ignore China and Russia, but it has to care about Japan and South Korea. Let's just imagine: Will the two 'allies' -- Japan and South Korea -- trust the United States faithfully if the latter completely bypasses them? As a result, Japan and South Korea must be involved in the nuclear issue on the Korean Peninsula [in one way or another], even if their rights [to the issue] are confirmed retroactively afterwards, or they are forced to acknowledge the conclusions reached in the bilateral talks [between Washington and Pyongyang] in the future.

"If Washington talks to Pyongyang about such a difficult [matter], the latter will have to take notice of the United States' position. In any case, it will be like putting on a show. Consequently, the structure of the Six-Party talks will remain. On the surface, the talks will act like the key to resolving the problem, but in reality, the United States and North Korea will be able to act freely -- they can call a Six-Party meeting if they have some announcements to make, and they can keep it confidential if they don't. No matter whether the bilateral talks will succeed or not, the Six-Party talks will have to swallow whatever results [from the bilateral talks] anyway."

13. U.S.-China-Taiwan Relations

"Disasters Tell Us Who Our Friends Really Are"

Media commentator James Wang opined in the pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times" [circulation: 30,000] (8/27):

"The government is asking the public not to 'overinterpret' its negligent handling of the disaster relief effort in southern Taiwan and its initial rejection of foreign aid before accepting US assistance. President Ma Ying-jeou, however, insists that US assistance is a sign of restored trust between Taiwan and the US. The unspoken implication, of course, is that if former president Chen Shui-bian and his administration had still been in power, the US would have stood by and watched Taiwanese die. ...

"The US' actions and a number of phrases used by its officials, such as 'humanitarian assistance' and assisting 'the Taiwanese people,' as well as a statement that there is 'no need to inform China,' highlight the significance of this assistance. The Taiwan Relations Act (TRA) stipulates that the US shall 'resist any resort to force or other forms of coercion that would jeopardize the security, or the social or economic system, of the people on Taiwan,' making it a matter of legal implementation. The US does not recognize Taiwan as part of the People's Republic of China, so it does not have to inform China of its actions. The US' disaster aid gives a clear response to the question of who Taiwan's friends and enemies really are. The US makes no territorial claims on Taiwan, and the TRA provides unilateral protection for Taiwan's security and well-being, while China wishes to annex Taiwan, with its 'Anti-Secession' Law threatening the use of force. ...

"The US' display was also a show of strength as far as China's military was concerned. If the US could mobilize so quickly for disaster relief efforts, then of course it could do the same in the

event of conflict. ... The significance of the US' disaster aid does not lie in mutual trust. Instead, it proves the folly of the government's policy to move closer to China and distance itself from the US. The TRA allows the US to assist Taiwan, and the US is the friend that will help to protect Taiwanese freedom and democracy."

WANG